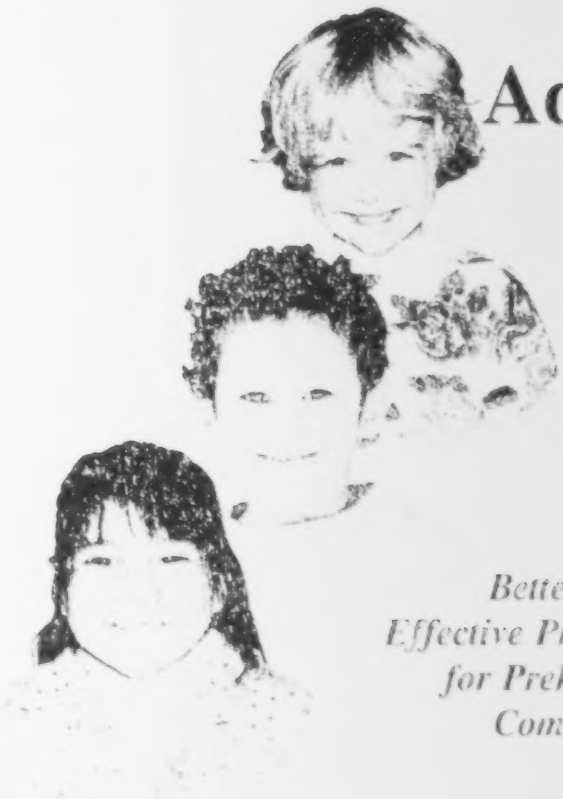
Saskatchewan
Learning

Prekindergarten Program

A Guide for Administrators



Executive Summary of
Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Effective Practices Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan Community Schools: 2004 Edition

September 2004

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This document is summarizes *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Effective Practices Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan Community Schools, 2004 Edition. Copies are available from the Saskatchewan Learning web site at http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/children_services/community_ed/ceprek.shtml or by calling 306-787-3938.*

I. Purpose of this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to give boards of education, directors of education, consultants, school-based administrators and community partners essential information from *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Effective Practices Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan Community Schools: 2004 Edition* that will assist in operating a Prekindergarten program. Specifically, the manual provides:

- an overview of the vision, goals and principles of Saskatchewan Learning's Prekindergarten Program;
- an overview of the components of the Prekindergarten Program;
- practical guidelines for establishing a Prekindergarten program; and,
- roles and responsibilities of the organizations and individuals involved.

The support and leadership of boards of education and administrators are critical to the establishment and ongoing improvement of Prekindergarten programs throughout the province.

II. Background: Prevention and Early Intervention

Research and experience demonstrate that prevention and early intervention in the first years of life represent a solid investment in a child's development. The benefits range from increased school success and improved cognitive functioning to fewer failed grades and lower rates of juvenile crime.

In 1996, Saskatchewan Learning (then Saskatchewan Education), in collaboration with school divisions, implemented the Prekindergarten Program for Community Schools. The Prekindergarten Program enhances the capacity of communities and school divisions to provide the early intervention supports needed by vulnerable children.

Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Effective Practices Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten in Community Schools, 2004 Edition provides the conceptual framework for a high quality, holistic early childhood educational program. Based on the provincial Kindergarten curriculum, it incorporates additional approaches and supports that have proven effective in nurturing success in school for three- and four-year-old children. The guidelines provide the vision, principles, and key elements of a preventive, early intervention program that emphasizes developmentally appropriate practice and a child-centred approach to the physical, social-emotional and intellectual development of vulnerable children.

The Prekindergarten Program aims to give children the opportunity to start Kindergarten with the social, emotional and cognitive skills necessary to succeed. Efforts spent on enabling better beginnings will help to ensure better futures.

III. Prekindergarten at a Glance

The goal of the Prekindergarten Program is to create the ideal learning environment. Prekindergarten programming incorporates what is known from the literature and practice about the early childhood education, and the needs of vulnerable children, with the strength of the Saskatchewan Kindergarten curriculum. The chart below provides a brief description of Saskatchewan Learning's Prekindergarten Program.

Prekindergarten is:

- developmentally appropriate educational program, founded on Saskatchewan's Kindergarten curriculum:
  - active, experiential learning through play
  - comprehensive, integrated program within a prepared environment
  - child-centred, self-directed, choice
  - focused on development of whole child - physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual
- meaningful family involvement
- active parent/community council, community partnerships and shared ownership
- integrated health, social services and educational supports
- culturally affirming for all
- mixed age groupings
- intensive exposure — minimum 12 hours per week
- professional teaching staff with a focus in early childhood education

IV. Prekindergarten Framework: Vision, Goals, Principals and Strategies

Vision

Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan incorporates a comprehensive range of effective educational practices to support young children's total development and to lay the foundation for school success and life-long learning. It provides a holistic, responsive, developmentally appropriate and caring learning program. The focus is on the healthy development of the whole child — physical, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual. Family members and care givers are active participants in the children's development and are provided with parenting skill development opportunities and social and health supports. Development and support for Prekindergarten is the shared responsibility of school divisions, community agencies, family members and the province.

Goals

The goals of the Prekindergarten Program are:

1. School and Life Success for Children

Children are able to achieve their full potential and to succeed in school and in life due to appropriate developmental opportunities and supports provided for them at an early age.

2. High Quality Prekindergarten Programming

Prekindergarten early childhood programming is of the highest quality – holistic, responsive, developmentally appropriate and culturally affirming. It is delivered in a safe and caring environment and provides young children with the physical, social, emotional and intellectual supports they require.

3. Increased Parenting Effectiveness and Shared Responsibility

Through their active involvement in the Prekindergarten program, parents enhance their parenting skills and share responsibility for the well-being and education of their children.

Principles and Strategies

1. Child-Centred / Family Focus

Children ages three and four are the heart of Prekindergarten. Their positive development is the focus of all programs and services. Emphasis is on the development of the whole child, providing balanced opportunities for children to develop socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually and intellectually. Prekindergarten affirms that children are usually best served in the context of their families.

2. Cooperation and Shared Responsibility
Teachers work in partnership with family members, the parent groups and community agencies to strengthen the learning program and to provide the range of supports students need. Teachers recognize the central responsibility of parents for the development and well-being of their children and encourage the active involvement of family members in the classroom.

Through shared funding and support for Prekindergarten programming, school divisions, community organizations and the province demonstrate their shared responsibility for early intervention initiatives.

3. Equity and Respect for Diversity
The unique potential, cultural heritage, gender, life experience and capabilities of each child and adult are respected and reflected in the program and environment. This principle goes beyond equality of opportunity, where everyone is treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment where all children can benefit. Foundational to the program and environment of each Prekindergarten is the belief that each individual child is worthy of respect and encouragement.

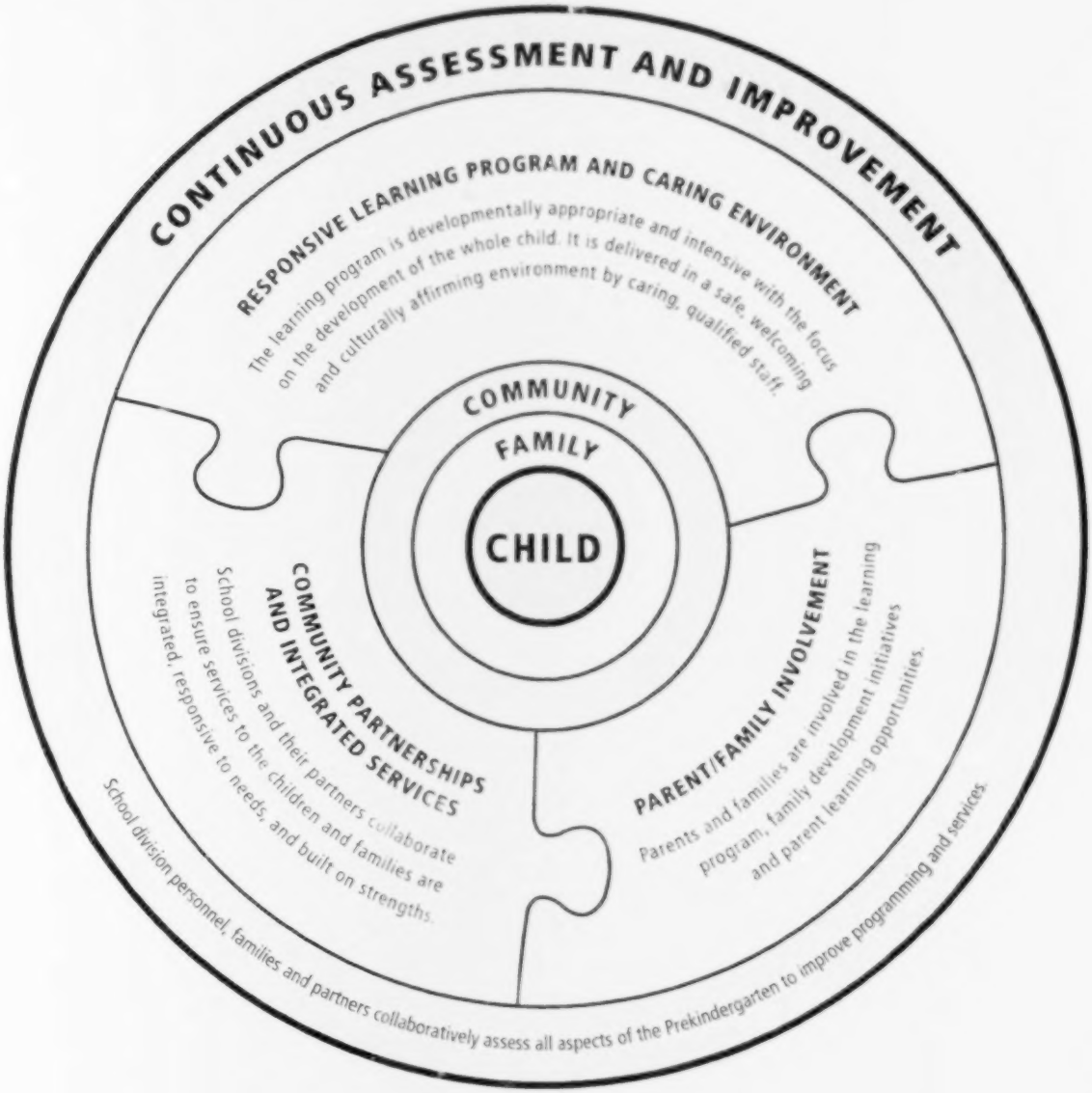
4. Preventive, Responsive and Holistic Approaches
Programs and services are designed to anticipate and offer supports to young children before significant problems develop that require major intervention. They are also responsive to the unique and varied needs of each child. As well, a comprehensive range of supports and services is provided in a coordinated and integrated manner to holistically meet the needs of children and their families.

5. Continuous Learning
Children's growth and learning are continuous processes. Learning begins at birth and continues through life. It is enhanced by a strong foundation established early in life.

6. Accountability: Continuous Assessment and Renewal
Educators, school councils, parents, boards of education and community members each have a role in ensuring that the Prekindergarten program meets the needs of children in preparing them to succeed in school. There is continuous assessment of the effectiveness of the program in meeting its objectives and improvements are made to ensure the very best educational practices for vulnerable children.

V. Prekindergarten Program Components

The key components and characteristics of a quality Prekindergarten program are based on the Saskatchewan Kindergarten curriculum with additional elements incorporated that have proven to be effective in meeting the needs of young children. The illustration below depicts these components.


CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT
RESPONSIVE LEARNING PROGRAM AND CARING ENVIRONMENT
The learning program is developmentally appropriate and intensive with the focus on the development of the whole child. It is delivered in a safe, welcoming and culturally affirming environment by caring, qualified staff.
COMMUNITY
FAMILY
CHILD
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND INTEGRATED SERVICES
School divisions and their partners collaborate to ensure services to the children and families are integrated, responsive to needs, and built on strengths.
PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT
Parents and families are involved in the learning program, family development initiatives and parent learning opportunities.
School division personnel, families and partners collaboratively assess all aspects of the Prekindergarten to improve programming and services.

Responsive Learning Program and Caring Environment

Prekindergarten is a developmentally appropriate early childhood education program that focuses on:

- fostering social development and self-esteem;
- nurturing educational growth and school success; and,
- promoting language development.

Characteristics of a Responsive Learning Program

The "effective practices" incorporated into the learning program are:

1. developmentally appropriate programming;
2. a prepared environment;
3. development of the whole child: an integrated, balanced focus on physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development;
4. active, experiential focus to learning: an environment that promotes play;
5. child-centred; and,
6. specialized education supports.

Characteristics of a Caring Learning Environment

The "effective practices" incorporated into the caring learning environment include ensuring that it is:

1. caring, nurturing and safe: focus on the development of a positive self-concept within each child;
2. culturally affirming; and,
3. open and welcoming.

See pages 8 to 12 and 20 to 41 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for detailed information.

Parent and Family Involvement

Parent and family involvement are central to the operation of an effective Prekindergarten and to the children's learning. Prekindergarten staff actively encourage the involvement of parent and family members in the education and development of their children. The objectives are to:

- foster shared responsibility for the development and well-being of the children;
- provide opportunities for parents to participate directly in their children's learning and to be perceived by their children as role models and "teachers" and as key people in the learning program;
- provide learning opportunities for parents to develop and enhance parenting and other life skills; and,
- encourage shared ownership for the Prekindergarten among families.

This focus on family and parent involvement reflects the importance of the family in the development of children. Researchers have demonstrated the significant benefits of parent involvement in children's learning, ranging from improved cognitive functioning to greater school success. Teachers also benefit from direct contact with families, gaining greater knowledge and understanding of the children, their families and the communities in which they teach. For many vulnerable children, parent involvement is the single most important factor in their school success.

Characteristics of Effective Parent and Family Involvement

The "effective practices" for successful parent involvement include:

1. parents in the classroom;
2. home visiting/liaison;
3. parent/school advisory council/committee; and,
4. family education programs.

See pages 12 to 15 and 42 to45 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for detailed information.

Community Partnerships and Integrated Services

Cooperative and collaborative arrangements with community agencies and human service providers extend the capacity of the Prekindergarten to meet the needs of the child in a holistic and coordinated manner. Forming partnerships with local groups such as churches, businesses and community service organizations, as well as collaborative relations with human service agencies such as Community Resources and Employment and the Regional Health Authority are critical to the success of Prekindergarten.

Characteristics of Effective Community Partnerships and Service Integration

The "effective practices" for successful community partnerships and service integration include:

1. coordination and integration of community services and resources;
2. community partnerships; and,
3. effective case management.

See pages 15, 16, and 45 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for detailed information.

Continuous Assessment and Improvement

Assessment provides information about child outcomes, program design, instructional strategies and parent involvement. Through assessment teachers can adapt the environment to promote learning and collaborate with partner agencies to adapt support services.

In the Prekindergarten there are five main areas of focus for assessment:

1. the child;
2. the learning program and the prepared environment;
3. the teacher's practice;
4. support services and community partnerships; and,
5. parent and family participation.

See pages 17 to 19 and 46 to 47 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for detailed information.

VI. Practical Guidelines for Developing a Prekindergarten

The following information provides suggestions for school divisions and their partners for planning and implementing a Prekindergarten program. Pages 20 to 47 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* provides detailed information on practical guidelines for operating a Prekindergarten program.

Working with Community Partners

School divisions are encouraged to bring together community partners to plan the implementation of a Prekindergarten program. Community partners may include Saskatchewan Community Resources and Employment, the regional health authority, local play school programs, day care centres, Early Childhood Intervention Program and family resource centres. School and division personnel that may have an interest in participating in the planning include kindergarten teachers, speech language pathologists, educational psychologists and student support consultants.

Staff Selection

Research strongly supports highly qualified staff working in early childhood intervention programs. Saskatchewan Learning emphasizes the hiring of a certified teacher with a specialty in early childhood education and an educational assistant with significant knowledge of the community and children's culture and experiences. School divisions are encouraged to employ educational assistants with early childhood education training as well.

In addition to the above qualifications, staff working in Prekindergarten require exceptional communications and relationship building skills in order to effectively engage both children and families.

Promoting the Program

As with any new program, how it is initially promoted within the community can greatly enhance its success. The partners may wish to discuss any sensitivities around the program and how to address concerns. As well, it will be important to ensure all the staff at the school are aware of the goals of Prekindergarten and of the program's components.

Student Selection Criteria

Prekindergarten is designed to provide early intervention programming for vulnerable children (those at risk of school and life failure).

School divisions are encouraged to ensure children with the greatest needs are served. Each school division will establish specific selection policies and criteria based on community needs. Suggested criteria include:

- low socio-economic status;
- parent(s) with less than high school education;
- parents speak a language other than English as their main language;
- parent is young and unmarried;
- parents would benefit from the parent education component; and,
- child displays social, behavioural, emotional, cognitive or communications challenges or delays.

Saskatchewan Learning recommends that a team approach for selection of children into the Prekindergarten program. Team members could include the teacher, educational assistant, representatives from community partners and other school personnel.

Multiple Effect of Risk Factors

Normally the existence of one risk factor, such as poverty, does not place a child at risk. However, risk factors tend to be present in clusters. For example, alcoholism and family dysfunction are often present with family poverty and it is these clusters that manifest problems for child well-being and success.

The multiple effect of these risk factors has been documented. *"One risk factor is no more likely than zero risk factor to predict difficulty. However, if two or three risk factors are present, the chances for an unfavourable outcome increase four times. With four risk factors the chances of a negative outcome are increased ten times."*

- Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (1996). *Successful services for our children and families at risk*. Paris, France: Author.

Other points to consider when establishing student selection criteria are:

- referral from community agencies such as the health authority and Community Resources and Employment;
- family requests because they cannot afford other programs;
- the family lives within school community/neighbourhood; and,
- family commitment to participation in the program.

Sample Day for a Prekindergarten

A.M.	P.M.	
9:00 – 9:30	12:45 – 1:15	Opening Activities / Circle Time
9:30 – 10:45	1:15 – 2:30	Learning Centre Time / Clean-up
10:45 – 11:30	2:30 – 3:15	Snack Time / Exercise Time
11:30 – 11:45	3:15 – 3:30	Home Time

See pages 32 to 35 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for detailed information.

Learning Centres

Young children need opportunities to play and experiment with materials and activities. Learning centres provide a way of organizing the Prekindergarten classroom so teachers can promote independent learning and decision making. When children play at learning centres they are exploring, learning and experimenting.

The following learning centres are recommended for a Prekindergarten classroom:

- water table
- sand table
- paint centre
- play dough centre
- dramatic/dress-up centre
- domestic/house-keeping centre
- library/private/quiet space
- listening centre
- writing/creative centre
- fine motor area
- science/discovery table
- work bench
- large motor area
- computer centre
- music centre

See Appendix D on page 22 of this Executive Summary and pages 23 to 27 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for detailed information on learning centres.

Facility Requirements

Prekindergarten children will need sufficient space that ensures their safety and meets programming needs. When determining the location of the Prekindergarten classroom, considerations include:

- building and fire codes;
- sufficient window area and natural lighting – refer *to The Child Care Regulations, 2001* on natural lighting (Sec. 56);
- a minimum of 3.25 square metres of usable floor space for each child;
- access to toilets and sinks;
- ease of providing nutrition snacks;
- access to an outside exit; and,
- access to community room or room where parent activities can take place.

See page 41 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for detailed information.

VII. Roles and Responsibilities

The following outline is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. It briefly describes expectations of roles and responsibilities, but provides flexibility for variations in contributions, capacities and roles from one Prekindergarten to another. More detailed descriptions are provided on pages 48 to 50 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures*.

Boards of Education

Boards of education that administer Prekindergarten programs work in partnership with the provincial government, schools, communities and families in the development, maintenance and evaluation of high quality Prekindergarten programs for vulnerable children. They provide direction and support to the program.

Teachers

Teachers in a Prekindergarten have a strong commitment to vulnerable children and a specialized knowledge of their learning needs and life experiences. They are innovative, flexible, cooperative and caring in their approach to teaching.

Teachers hold professional qualifications with a focus in early childhood education or a related field. This allows them to assess developmental levels and to create a learning environment and program that is appropriate for the range of developmental levels of the children. Teachers hold a belief in the importance of family participation and home visits and in child-centred learning. As well, they are committed to the community education philosophy and practice.

The teacher's primary roles in Prekindergarten are facilitator, master player and guide rather than dictator of what and how learning occurs.

Educational Assistants

Educational assistants work in partnership with the teacher to deliver a high quality Prekindergarten program in a warm, safe and culturally affirming environment. Where possible, the educational assistants come from the community in which the school is located, providing information about the culture and the community to help the teacher and other school staff become more aware of, and sensitive to, the cultural and socio-economic characteristics of the community.

The educational assistant has completed Grade 12 and has a combination of experience and training in early childhood development. The position requires strong interpersonal and problem solving skills, a respect and affection for children and an understanding and appreciation of the cultures and experiences of the children and the community. Educational assistants have a commitment to the philosophy and practices of community education.

Parents and Families

Parents and families play a key role in the effectiveness of the Prekindergarten program. Their involvement is encouraged and actively sought as it is critical to the well-being and development of their children. Parents and other family members provide information and advice to the teacher and educational associate regarding their child's needs, interests and preferences.

Parents and other family members ensure their child attends regularly and extend opportunities for their child's learning in the home. They feel welcome and comfortable in the Prekindergarten classroom and in the school.

Community Members and Agencies

Community members and agencies provide a variety of important supports, enabling the Prekindergarten to meet the needs of the children and their families in a comprehensive, holistic manner. Partners include: churches; service clubs; human service agencies, such as Community Resources and Employment, health authorities (public health, mental health and speech language services); businesses; libraries; post-secondary training institutions; and community associations. They provide supports and services such as food and nutrition, clothing exchange rooms, immunizations, counselling, parenting supports and literacy initiatives.

Saskatchewan Learning

Saskatchewan Learning works in partnership with boards of education to provide the vision, policy, guidelines and funding support for Prekindergarten programming for vulnerable children. The department collects data and evaluative information, preparing reviews and reports as needed. It maintains close links with the school divisions and provides developmental supports, consultation and advice upon request.

Appendices

Appendix A: Commonly Asked Questions

Appendix B: Facilitating the Development of the Whole Child

Appendix C: Basic Furniture and Materials Inventory

Appendix D: Learning Centre Descriptions

Appendix A: Commonly Asked Questions

1. **Why is Prekindergarten a targeted program?**
   In 1996, Saskatchewan Learning in cooperation with school divisions began to develop the Prekindergarten Program in Community Schools. Limited resources necessitated the targeting of Prekindergarten to the highest needs children in the highest needs communities.

2. **What does "developmentally appropriate" mean"**
   Developmentally appropriate means age appropriate and individual appropriate. "Knowledge of typical development of children within an age range served by the program provides a framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences. Learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideals and people. These experiences would match the child's abilities, while also challenging the child's interest and understanding." (Bredekamp, 1987)

3. **What does "play-based learning" mean?**
   Young children learn best through direct, concrete experience of the world, rather than through the symbolic manipulations more often associated with formal instruction (Molnar, 1991). Quality Prekindergarten programs challenge young children while they play. The teacher has carefully prepared the learning environment through learning centres, and while the children play, the teacher moves around to both small groups and individual children to explain, model language and behaviour, encourage, extend play, assess, and create learning situations.

4. **What are learning centres?**
   Learning centres are distinct areas of the classroom organized by learning themes. Materials are continually added and deleted to match the ever changing developmental needs of children. Fifteen learning centres have been identified to support the Prekindergarten Program.

   See pages 12 and 22 of this document, and pages 23-27 in *Better Beginnings, Better Futures* for more information on learning centres.

5. **Why are groupings of three- and four-year olds recommended for Prekindergarten?**
   Multi-age groupings are advantageous for both social and academic development, especially for the younger aged children. Within a classroom of mixed-age children there is more opportunity to develop relationships with peers who complement, match or supplement their own needs and styles. Low functioning children may

find it less stressful to interact with younger children in areas in which they lag behind children who are their same age.

6. **Why do staff need to have a specialization in early childhood education?**
Research shows that staff need a sound foundation in the understanding of early childhood development. Prekindergarten is an early intervention program based on the philosophy of Saskatchewan's Kindergarten Curriculum. Teachers need to have the background knowledge to teach children who are developmentally diverse.

Teacher need to understand:

- child development and how children learn;
- integrated curriculum and instructional strategies;
- continual evaluation and assessment;
- how to establish and maintain a child centred environment;
- how to communicate with families; and,
- implementation of the parent education component.

References

Bredekamp, S. (1987). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education programs serving children from birth through age 8*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Molnar, J. (1991, May). What good prekindergarten programs look like. *Streamlined Seminar*, 9(5), 114-119.

Appendix B: Facilitating the Development of the Whole Child

Physical	Social	Emotional/Spiritual/Cultural	Intellectual
• provide regular access to the gym or multi-purpose area; • plan opportunities for outdoor play; • provide daily opportunities to run, jump, climb, swing and participate in other cardiovascular exercise; • provide activities that promote flexibility and coordination, such as yoga, dance, and playing with balls, hula hoops and skipping ropes; • provide access to tricycles and riding toys; • plan neighbourhood walks or hikes; and, • participate in swimming lessons.	• help children feel comfortable in the classroom by using facial expressions, tone of voice and body language that show acceptance of each child; • play cooperative games such as parachute games that encourage the children to work together; • accept children's developmental levels and willingness to participate; • plan field trips and outings; • visit other classrooms; • pair children with older students for "reading buddies" or other activities; • hold children's conferences; and, • encourage sharing of materials, toys, manipulatives and space among children.	• encourage children to separate from care givers; • give children leadership roles within the classroom, such as teacher's helper; • ensure that children have a sense of belonging (e.g. ,put their name on their locker or coat hook, label all of their work); • trust children to make choices and suggestions about their own learning by allowing them to select books from the library, move learning materials from one learning centre to another and select which pieces of their work will be displayed; • accept children's creative endeavours and do not judge them by adult standards; • encourage independence by giving children responsibilities, such as putting away materials in a learning centre, getting their shoes for gym time or delivering a message to the office; • use photographs of the children as teaching tools; • validate the contributions of the children by engaging them in respectful conversations, acknowledging their ideas and using their suggestions; • trust children to make decisions and take risks; • develop children's trust in the teacher by being honest and open and making the classroom safe and respectful; • provide appropriate consequences for inappropriate behaviour; • provide a predictable routine within the program; and, • build confidence and self-esteem by offering genuine praise for effort, accepting a wide range of abilities and giving many opportunities for each child to experience success.	• provide materials, learning centres and activities that are developmentally appropriate; • observe the children as they interact and extend their play; • pose open-ended questions as the children interact with the environment; • challenge the children's thinking by modelling and by asking questions as they play; • stimulate their thinking and their play by modifying the environment regularly; • extend learning by using a variety of props and encouraging children to use their imaginations; • provide opportunities for children to solve problems, improvise, investigate, modify and create; and, • encourage decision making by providing opportunities for children to make choices.

Appendix C: Prekindergarten Basic Furniture and Materials Inventory

Furniture and Facilities	Manipulatives	Teacher Materials/ Teaching Tools	Classroom Consumable Supplies
• audio cassette player • bathroom (easy access) • bulletin boards (hung low for child viewing) • carpeted area • child-size chairs • computer and software • containers for access of materials on shelves and for storage in classroom • crib or bed for playhouse • cupboard for storage • desk and chair for teacher • dust pan and short handled broom • easel • experience chart stand • filing cabinet • flannel board and felt figures • listening post and head phones • lockers or coat hooks • magnet board and figures • mini gym or access to play area • mirrors • (short-handled) mop and bucket • overhead projector (access to) • paint shirts/aprons • parachute (access to) • pocket chart • pots and pans for play house • puppet theatre	• animals (variety of toy stuffed, realistic wooden and plastic) • beads and other lacing materials • blocks (variety of sizes, textures and composition, e.g. Duplo, Lego, Tinker Toy and wooden) • books (fair and equitable) • cash register and Canadian money • chalk slates, brushes and chalk • cutlery for play house • dishes for play house • doctor/medicine kit • dolls and clothes (fair, equitable, both genders and multicultural) • doll house and furniture (model) • dress-up accessories (purses, shoes, plastic hats, etc.) • dress-up clothes • garbage cans • props (miniature signs, vehicles, people, animals, buildings etc.) • puppets • puzzles • rhythm instruments • sand table materials (pails, shovels, sand wheel etc.) • science supplies (batteries, wires, bulbs etc.) • materials that can be sorted and classified •sorting trays	• aquarium • balance scale • bean bags • cages for pets • camera • cookie sheets, bowls, utensils for food experience (access to) • date stamp • day book • hula hoops • hole punch • educational kits (MOKAKIT, CARE KIT, etc.) • magnifying glasses • measuring sticks, cups, cylinders and containers of various sizes and shapes • pet supplies and food • plants • scissors • stapler • straight pins • utility balls	• film and processing • food for food experience • "fun tack" • glue • markers, crayons, pencils, pens • miscellaneous treasures including buttons, shells, rocks, etc. • paint • paper (chart, note, lined, unlined, coloured, etc.) • play dough • staples • tape

Furniture and Facilities	Manipulatives	Teacher Materials/ Teaching Tools	Classroom Consumable Supplies
• refrigerator and stove (access to for food experience) • refrigerator for play house • sand table • shelves • sink • stove for play house tables (child-size) • water shirts/aprons for water table • water table • white board • work bench • water shirts/aprons for water table • water table • white board • work bench	• sponges for water table, paint, etc. • telephones for play house • vehicles (variety of boats, planes, trains, trucks, etc.) • water table materials (pails, jugs, hoses, etc.) • wood scraps and carpentry tools (3 inch) vice, 8 oz. hammer, push drill, sand paper, nails, screws, etc.)		

Appendix D: Learning Centre Descriptions

A quality Prekindergarten will have the following learning centres:

Learning Centres	Example of Equipment	Alternative Themes/ Enhancements	Sample Concepts and Objectives
1. Water Table	• plastic-lined, solidly constructed table, approximately child's waist height that allows about 35-40 cm. depth of water and has a flat bottom and lid • squeezable plastic containers and lids, sieves, funnels, water wheels, clear plastic hoses, sponges • corks and other materials that sink and float • plastic shirts/aprons (painting shirts can double)	• enhancements: food colouring, anti-bacterial soap, snow, whipped laundry detergent • change the water daily • keep a short handled mop or rags close by so children can clean own spills	• experiment, compare, demonstrate, predict, plan, interpret, extend, explore, discover, conclude, feel, determine • pre-writing, pre-math
2. Sand Table	• plastic-lined, solidly constructed table, approximately child's waist height that allows about 35-45 cm. depth of sand and has a flat bottom and lid • sanitized sand is preferred • variety of plastic containers and lids, sieves, funnels, sand wheels, plastic hoses, pails, shovels, spoons, various sized cylinders, trowels	• enhancements: grain, water, and sand, dirt or aquarium gravel • keep short handled broom close by so children can clean own spills	• repeat, describe, explain, estimate, predict, measure, assess, judge, fill, organize, resolve, pour, pre-writing, pre-math, fine and gross motor development
3. Paint Centre	• round table and chairs and/or easels • different colours and forms of paint: powder, premixed, blocks, finger paint • variety of brushes • paper • paint shirts/aprons • storage for supplies and shirts (accessible to children) • water source	• enhancements: soap, glue, sand and sparkles	• repeat, express, select, recall, imagine, interpret, create, experiment, transfer, produce, plan, design, organize, choose
4. Play Dough Centre	• containers for storing play dough • flour, salt for making dough • variety of cutlery, cookie cutters, rolling pins		• manipulate, demonstrate, select, create, compare, explore, feel, determine

Learning Centres	Example of Equipment	Alternative Themes/ Enhancements	Sample Concepts and Objectives
5. Dramatic/ Dress-Up	• containers for storage of dress-up clothes children can access • plastic hats (easy to keep clean) • mirrors (full-size allows child to view full self • variety of clothes, hats, purses, scarves, belts, shoes and props	• people in neighbourhood • cultural differences • enhancement: safety – e.g., add fire fighter and police shirts and make badges to complement safety theme	• relate, identify, select, express, present, infer, speculate, imagine, identify, create, consider, plan, respond
6. Domestic/ House Keeping	• table and chairs • baby beds, cribs, high-chair, stroller • refrigerator, stove, sink, cupboard • dolls • dishes, pots, cutler • telephone(s)	• enhancement: store – e.g., add plastic fruit, empty cans and boxes, cash register, papers and pencils for lists, bags for groceries, play money	• discuss, restate, predict, speculate, match, label, speak, listen, estimate, assess, project, imagine, resolve, establish, pursue
7. Library/ Private, Quiet Space	• an area of the room away from traffic flow • every changing selection of children's literature • stuffed animals, pillows, pictures	• enhancements: upholstered furniture, plants	• model, listen, speak, predict, repeat, interpret, discover, verify, analyze, count, tell, imagine, infer, explain, read
8. Listening Centre	• tape recorder and tapes with stories and songs	• enhancements: add a listening post for head phones and multiple copies of story books	• repeat, name, listen, speak, predict, operate, discover, review, read
9. Writing/ Creative Centre	• table and chairs • bins, baskets and containers to store materials • writing and illustrating materials: chalk, markers, crayons, pencils, scissors, glue • paper: lined and unlined, variety of colours, textures and sizes • recycled material: catalogues, markers, crayons, pencils, scissors, glue • paper: lined and unlined, variety of colours, textures and sizes • recycled material: catalogues, magazines, cards, ribbon, foil packing chips, buttons, foam containers, etc. • containers and packaging with print that children can copy		• record, explain, identify, express, label, create, plan, imagine, measure, solve, experiment, adapt, judge, design, invent, form, integrate, write, respond, compare, read • pre-reading, pre-math, emerging literacy
10. Fine Motor Area	• storage shelves and bins, table and chairs • puzzles of various sizes and themes with different numbers of pieces and materials • lace-up cards, different colour and texture	• enhancement: add cereal such as Fruit Loops to make edible necklaces and bracelets	• repeat, locate, select, demonstrate, tinker, manipulate, plan, classify, estimate, measure,

Learning Centres	Example of Equipment	Alternative Themes/ Enhancements	Sample Concepts and Objectives
	• stringing beads, string, show laces, wool, plastic for lacing • zipper, snap and tie materials • blocks of varied shapes, sizes and textures (Duplo, Lego) • peg boards, pegs, elastics		experiment, judge, plan, build, consider
11. Science/ Discovery Table	• plants, pets, seeds, rocks, cones, shells, magnifying glass, magnet, batteries, wire, aquarium, terrarium, nests, multi-sensory materials	• enhancement: materials found by children	• find, label, select, predict, speculate, estimate, compare, manipulate, experiment, imagine, decide, feel, verify
12. Work Bench	• hammer, nails, boards and scraps of wood, vise, screws, screwdriver(s) and saw	• enhancements: large tree stump	• operate, know, demonstrate, measure, experiment, explore, manipulate, create, choose, design
13. Large Motor Area	• space for use of riding toys, running, climbing, jumping, tumbling • storage and carpet • large blocks and interlocking toys of different textures and sizes, interlocking road track • games	• enhancements: props such as toy vehicles, animals and people	• identify, select, sequence, plan, compare, operate, decide, invent, build, devise, consider, respond, discover, match
14. Computer	• table, chairs, computer, programs (age appropriate)	• enhancements: joy stick and printer	• operate, manipulate, demonstrate, solve, discover, choose, respond
15. Music	• storage container for a variety of commercially produced and hand made rhythm instruments	• enhancement: instruments used in different cultures	• identify, experiment, create, devise, imagine, manipulate